POEMS AND SONNETS

By Frank Kendon

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BY
FRANK KENDON

JOHN LANE THE BODLEY HEAD LTD
VIGO STREET, LONDON, W.1

First Published in 1924

Made and Printed in Great Britain at the
*Curwen Press, Plaistow, E.*13

TO MY
MOTHER

21031

Some of the poems following have appeared in 'The London Mercury,' 'The Challenge,' 'The Cambridge Review,' and 'The Westminster Gazette.' Thanks are offered to the editors of these papers and also to Messrs. Bowes & Bowes, the publishers of 'Poems by Four Authors,' where others were first printed.

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POEMS AND SONNETS

A PORTRAIT

YOU need not so amazèd look
Upon your image herein drawn,
I copied from no other book
Than those two eyes that now look on.

Yes, this fair counterfeit of you,
This paragon to your own eyes,
Fellows in feature, grace and hue
Yourself that smile in calm surprise.

Only in this less real, alas!
By my poor fault too soon endowed;
This, limned by me, my lover was,
Whose fair original proves too proud.

CHILD TO WHOM ALL WORDS

(To Barbara)

CHILD, to whom all words
Are pleasant sounds,
As to us the various calls of birds—
Pleasant before the joy is turned to thought,
Strange music strangely caught—
O Baby, for whose eyes
Colour in sun or shadow lives or dies
Fraught with no meaning, signifying but
Eyes open wide or tremulously shut,
Your small, receptive being rouses in me
New aspects of an old perplexity.

Strange miracle! that love,
Whose shape and substance out of nothing sprang,
Should thus take form, thus move,
Thus lie staring upon and listening to
A world not new, save as it seems to you,
A careless world, that through five senses shall
Fashion a soul to seem perpetual.

Not in that passive little form imprisoned yet,
Where does the spirit tarry that shall soon
Inform each action? Can five wits beget
A sixth from nothing? You will walk alone,
Lisp, laugh, and cry, love and be loved,
In a few years; although we cannot guess
Now in what way, or whence removed,
Shall enter the spirit of you, your separateness.

Lie quiet and sleep,
Sleep on your mother's arm.
Not only does love vow itself to keep
Away all harm
From you; but breathes
Into your frailty, itself so strong;
And round about you, every moment, wreathes
Hope's lovely garland. Time shall not seem long
To the first word, the willing smile,
The wilful tears; and, in a little while,
By one more miracle, more marvellous than birth,
In your own right you too shall love the earth.

Then shall the sadness and the rare surprise,
The cry of beauty, half-articulate,
Play on your heart, and slowly make you wise,
Some solitude bring and keep you separate:
Till, looking out, the souls of friends shall be
Distinct from yours, your own a mystery.

Memory shall not help you then,
Nor the wise utterances of men,
When from your puzzled soul the cry
Goes out, unanswered: 'Who and whence am I?'

Unanswered? No; for there are some
To whom Truth's fullest mystery comes home;
And, Baby, you are to your mother's earlier cry
At once a riddle and a wise reply.

THE MOTHER-IN-LAW

IN the quiet and cool of day,
Before the dew from the hedge
Distilled with night away,
Or the crested eastern ridge
Burnt with the morning, came
Proserpine, with chill hands
Gathering the crumpled flame
Of poppies. There she stands,
Barefooted by the corn,
In the opening cool of day;
Red as the flowers borne
In her arms, and white as may.

Clear sounds the tune she sings,
Through the fine morning ringing,
As home she runs, as she flings
Her harvest aside—still singing;
And while in an earthen jar
She pours the curving water,
Ceres marks, from afar,
Her idle, unconscious daughter.

Without a cloud, the day
Brightens above the girl;
And even while floats away
The bubble on the swirl

That her dipping bucket stirred,
The promissory light
Wakens another bird
To song and sudden flight.

Ceres and Proserpine
Have set the flowers in water;
They have carried the pitcher in.
And bustle of work, and laughter,
Comes through the open door
All day, until evening settles—
Until on their sanded floor
Drop morning's poppy-petals.

How wide are cloudless skies.
How cool is the mellow air.
Proserpine's roving eyes
Across her cornfields stare.
She slips her sandals, and steals
Quietly forth again.
Hushed are the nightingales,
And whisperless is the young grain.

Without a cloud, the night
Deepens swiftly above her;
The poppies are black to her sight,
And harder now to discover;
But the night about her is sweet
With dew and summer; she fears not—
The tread of horses' feet
Over corn is soft—she hears not;

Until suddenly at her side,
As if out of darkness sprung,
Is standing—a king, by his pride—
Her lover, dark and strong.
Before she could think or fly
She felt his imprisoning arm.
He held her; kissed her cry
Into silence and dumb alarm;

Lifted her—light she was—
Called to his horses; was gone
Before she could cry 'Alas!'
Or throw the last flower down.

Darkness covered the corn
Before her mother's cry,
On the still air far borne,
Rang out. And for reply
Nothing but echoes came,
Strange, mournful, demented,
Repeating her daughter's name
Like a lost name lamented.

All through the star-lit hours
She searched about the plain,
Treading the scarlet flowers;
But when day came again
She found the trampled place,
The wheel-tracks through the corn,
And wept, and covered her face
To know herself forlorn.

Anger and fear and tears
Contended in her heart.
She had thought the girl was hers;
She had loved her, for her part,
She said; and although a king
Had stolen Proserpine,
Loss was a bitter thing,
And a daughter more than a queen.

OPHELIA

HERE with a handful of faded flowers lies Ophelia,
She that died with a song on her lips in sadness;
Earth knows nothing of this, her secret interment,
Save for the knowledge of one more flower plucked early.

Here with the night her songs have sunken to stillness.
The tears of the mourners fell, but Earth, unheeding,
Thought but a 'lated shower had fallen with nightfall,
And only stirred in her sleep, not caring to wake.

Cover her in: her love and her grief strove together;
Now, reconciled, they sleep, bedfellows complacent.
Cover her in: her sighing ceased with her singing,
And Death on a cool stream his garlanding gave.

THE PROMISE

I WOULD have you call me
If, in some night,
Swift unreasoning sadness
Rise in you and smite
Through the passionless dark
Your frail delight.

I would have you call me
When, unaware,
Sudden joy leaps on you—
Call my wraith to share
Through the impassioned day
Your joy there.

I shall hear, I promise,
And answer, and come;
Bid the joy bring blessing,
Strike the sorrow dumb.
O steel your timorous faith!
I shall come.

A TOWN LOVER

LOUD wind's abroad; how it will sway
The trees that stand on watch for her,
Making a musical delay;
And where I dally grass will stir,
Bright-spotted, dandelion and clover
Leaning as the wind sweeps over.

Then one will come; and I'll forget
These commonplaces of delight;
No need of flowers to say who's sweet
Except when she is out of sight,
Nor any wind's low song to teach
Me music, having heard her speech.

O snail-paced hour, as yet the dell
Whereto the wind directs me, sleeps,
None by to break the magic spell,
No kiss to wake the forest deeps,
No mind to miss the whispered story,
No eye to overlook the glory.

Good Father Time, release me, come!
No one will miss me. Only here
The shadow of the apple bloom
Makes reading nonsense, and the clear
Sun on the carpet falls so rarely—
What if she, too, should be there early?

She, with the tossing trees above her,
  The sunlight flashing at her feet;
She, with her dandelions and clover,
  And wind about her, petal-sweet;
With the dark forest sighing near—
And I, with my books, moping here.

A COUNTRY LOVER

I CAME to the city where you live;
I found there many a sign of you;
Market and street had signs to give;
Church and cathedral knew.

I stared in the passing strangers' faces
To read if lately you had passed;
And at every corner checked my paces
Saying: 'Perhaps she comes at last.'

And at last I saw you. My heart beat
Loudly as eye to eye we met;
But you looked strangely—the long street
Was populous as yet.

You had passed unrecognising—passed
Like any other girl in the crowd.
I mocked, and would not turn to cast
A second look; I, too, was proud.

No! If you stayed for my recalling
You had no cause for any alarm!
Then suddenly, as your city was falling
From heaven, you turned and touched my arm.

THE IMMIGRANT

WHEN Ruth was old
She'd take her children's children on her knee.
They never wearied to be told
Tales of her girlhood in a far country.

For though her eyes grew dim
Men said of her: 'Her heart is always young.'
And Boaz, while she spoke to him,
Loved the faint accent of a foreign tongue.

NOW TO THE WORLD

NOW to the world we'll go, my body and I,
Leaving the comfortable nights and days,
The books where wise old men in wise old ways
Wrote down their thoughts of life in years gone by.

Snap up the switch, and let the darkness down;
Shut the two doors; deliver up the key.
These things pass on to others; but for me
They have grown lifeless—I must seek my own.

Picture and book, most taciturn, most dear;
Hearth where I burned my more ambitious rhymes;
Room where I dreamed of life a thousand times;
Scene of so many a joy and fancied fear,

There is no break in this farewell. I go,
Eager as sailors to the uncharted sea—
To wreck or Eldorado—steadfastly;
Whither, save hence, I do not care nor know.

Here I have laid my little-practised hand
To many a task, as children play, for learning;
Here I have told my closest secrets, burning
With strong affection for some intimate friend.

Here we have laughed, or argued, man with man,
Till the quick double pulse of midnight sounded;
Have mocked at Time and Death, and been confounded;
Have spoken glibly of the race we ran.

And here, in silence, as the impatient morning
Hovered behind the elms, I spoke with Sorrow;
Clung to wild prophecies of hope to-morrow;
Prayed to I know not Whom, and met day scorning.

Here it was hard to lose, if only dreams;
And here, where empty walls return my stare,
A strong imagination, passionate, clear,
Opened a window upon love, it seems:

Better than art, by trembling fingers made;
The portrait of a queen without her crown,
A thing alive, with magic looks cast down,
And moving lips, by cunning truth portrayed. . . .

Close the two doors. Deliver up the key.
There is no break in this farewell to peace—
No frown or smile to signify release—
Snap up the switch and let the darkness see!

FOR DEATH

FRANKLY I don't believe in you;
You overdo your boasts, quaint spectre;
Beauty and life and love renew
Despite your pasteboard crown and sceptre.

And see, tragedian, here are fields
Full of a gold as rich as last year;
A baby laughs, a lover yields,
A shepherd leads his lambs to pasture.

For shame, Death! What if one by one
Old loves, old hates, old bones and sinews
Succumb? Your throne is meanly won—
Men may surrender, Man continues.

OPTIMISM

THE poor plane tree, with mottled bark,
Raises its bare twigs to the dark,
And seems to hope, the Lord knows why,
For stars in that unlikely sky.

THE COMMERCIAL TRAVELLER

I BIND my brow with summer leaves;
Under the cave of heaven I walk;
An invisible lark is singing aloft with rapture—
But to my ears his song is idle talk.

The river sedges, though no wind
Is stirring them, tell secrets too—
Barber of Midas! Is the truth abroad then,
That all wild creatures shun me as they do?

How to relinquish happiness
With a good grace is hard to learn.
In these same river meadows was I transported—
I am not old, but age must have its turn.

Here, where these white lilies open,
Where through the water brown fish flash,
By the steep bank where hawthorn grows, as it grew then,
Under the silver archways of the ash,

With the same summer heaven and earth
That taught me wise abandon once,
An impassable barrier of tongues has arisen between us,
And as I age, I grow an incredible dunce.

FOOLISH WISDOM

IT is an age since I have seen the sun.
Now, pipe in mouth, I am content to waste
The crisp air and the open space outside,
Learning to cultivate a senile taste.

I never marked the marshalling of years;
Laughed, I remember, to be told that time
Waited for no man. I, said I, am young,
(For then I was) and shall not lose my prime.

Somehow, I cannot tell, a change was wrought;
The light went out; and yet I did not grope
In blindness through a world so slowly dimmed,
Noticed no change of fervour or of hope;

Till, like a garment woven by myself,
Custom, that kept me warm, had stifled me—
Till, mirrored in the follies of my youth,
I saw the alteration suddenly.

Now I may break my pipe and habits, both,
And act a part with palpable success;
But stealthy years have conquered, and I miss
A joy that came, unasked, with carelessness.

Oh, it's an age since I have seen the sun
Lift from the east, familiar majesty;
And all the little wonders of the world
Are commonplace, and move no ecstasy.

Was youth a search for beauty's ultimate—
The living god inspiriting—white truth?
Age is a search, with poor hope of success,
For what one lost, or valued not, in youth.

OLD TO YOUNG

KEEP your true faith in what's untrue!
A little while delay the hour:
A little longer, O frail flower,
Sweeten the air; be proud the while;
Know not of petal-felling noon.
At death incredulously smile;

That we poor souls, who can foretell
The fearful tears that wait to fall—
Who fear to break the spell, since all
Our lost deceptions live in you—
May laugh by proxy, and renew
Truths that mere age would prove untrue.

ONCE

SWEET-FLOWING verses
Once had charm:
Round lovely thought,
As bees, would swarm
Words having wings,
That brought with them
Passionate beauty's
Diadem.
But now no more,
Alas! Alas!
But now no more.
Glory that was
Is gone from earth,
And, winter-like,
Sharp pangs of frost
Through the heart strike.
Beauty like roses
Comes and goes;
Whence nor whither
No man knows.
Leaf and petal,
Shrunken, fell:
Yea, death darkened
Things loved well.
Unkind was the touch
That thus bereft
Life, and so thorned
A memory left;

Kinder, meseems,
  Since leaves must fall,
Stem and stock,
  To uproot all:
To save from budding
  Uselessly
The gnarled, sere twigs
  Of such a tree . . .
Only to-day,
  (O mourn no more!)
Fashion of loveliness,
  Seen before,
Flashed from within
  Marvellously;
And a new rose bloomed,
  And her scent shook free.
Deep in her leaves
  Old fire burneth;
Ebbed hope surgeth;
  Glory returneth.
Love droopeth not;
  Youth dieth never;
And Once that was ours
  Bideth ever.

NEVER

WHEN from my contending choice
Loss has stripped the mood of pride;
When, at such unreckoned price,
Hopes which self can ill avoid
Lie dead and buried;
When, if ever, that time comes,
Earth, disguise thy common signs—
Signs I have read a thousand times
In desperate hope, and never once
To prove them valid—
Let me be blind to midnight skies;
Let me forget what follows rain;
And look unmoved on spring's displays,
And summer's glow, and sad decline
After the harvest,
Or die, uncaring. . . . But till then—
While unfounded faith seems truth,
While there's hope to call the tune,
While there's time to laugh at death—
Let love continue!

THE KERNEL

NOW that the flush of summer is gone,
And in the lane no flower is seen,
No hedge in leaf,
No tree in gold or green;

Now that the golden fruit is stored,
And in the wood no song is heard,
No merry stir
Of song from any bird;

Now that the uncompanioned wind
Blows cold across the naked land,
And, hung in black,
Bare trees like mourners stand;

Winter reveals, through falling rain,
A strength which summer had left unseen:
Beauty and peace
Which, but for tears, had been in vain,
Which, but for loss, had never been.

TO A HOPEFUL BLACKBIRD IN 'PARK DRIVE'

CASSANDRA'S prophecies were all of tears;
Yours are of joy—and yet the sullen sky
Droops unconvinced. Trees and the earth have ears,
But not for joy, nor your prophetic cry,
O lonely bird unseen,
Who, because springs have been,
Will not, in bleak days, let the forlorn hope die.

How rich in crocuses these gardens shone,
That now are brown and desolated banks;
How musical were winds in summer, blown
Through the lost leaves of these deserted ranks,
These roofless avenues
Of elms, wherein you choose
To perch and prophesy, and get no thanks.

Beyond the Castle lies the clattering town,
Trodden in mud, and overcast with smoke,
Listening to noisy troubles of its own:
Better to go and sing to those deaf folk
Than here, in drive and street,
Where all sounds indiscreet
Beside the tradesman's deferential knock.

Still fluting, trilling, calling? Singing still?
Is there some hidden listener, from whose heart

An echo quavers back, as Castle Hill
Repeats the stave you love, the careless part—
  One proud young soul, who feels
  Truth in your quick appeals,
And at your bidding sees the budding start?

Farewell, young blackbird; you and I can share
A secret safely. Sing all day, she hears!
Pour all your passionate message on the air;
Lift the dull sky with laughter, till it clears;
  Sing loudly on and on,
  And proudly, happy one—
Cassandra's prophecies were full of tears.

THE TWISTED LANE

THE twisted lane, for all its riches,
Remembers nothing of his stride;
The buttercup, that boast of meadows,
Apple-blossom's short-lived pride,
The daily-taller-growing thistles,
Exult as when he passed. They break
Into a mirth as light as ever,
And bloom—thank God!—for no man's sake.

Otherwise in these haunted valleys
Death would at one wide sweep steal all;
And men, whose lethe flows from beauty,
Would fear to see a petal fall.
But now, since Nature makes no mourner
(Blossoming into obsequies),
We who denied the lapse of sorrow
Yield reluctantly to peace.

FIRST-LOVE

LADY, when I have run this race,
When I have lost, and long for rest,
I shall recall your lamplit face,
And how you said good-night the best.
I shall be quite a child once more,
And wait, awake, to hear your tread
On the narrow stairs to the nursery door,
Certain of being comforted.
Old I may be before that night,
And you beyond the reach of age;
But what dare Time or Death to spite
A kiss remembered? They can wage
Long wars and win; they cannot take
A fortress so impregnable!
Many the nights I lay awake—
I never knew this thought to fail.
Others there are whom I have loved,
And feared to make ashamed; but you
Changed not though all my ventures proved
Ill-timed—you shared my downfalls too.
O constant kindness! When at last
Life ends on honour or disgrace,
They will not change your love, or cast
A shadow on your gentle face . . .
Lady, when Life and Death agree,
Whether I've lost or whether won,
You will not come to question me.
And I shall be glad to be your son.

THE BACKWATER

(To E. L. D.)

THOUGH quietness, though quietness of mien
Lay like a mask upon my features, brother,
And though the idle, random, easy words
Fell from our lips, like water dropping slowly
Over the fern-leaves on some forest pond—
You read my secret falsely. True, the place
Was peace imbued; the hour, the time of year,
The smoothed-out leisure, the enormous dreams
Of trees upon the undulating water,
The 'world-without-end' cooing of the doves
Hidden in summer's highth (the Milton word
That sounded smoothly of sweet antiquity)—
All these were symbols, fencing in our thoughts
To short tranquility. The scarcely swaying punt
Hung between verdant roof and dark reflection;
Up or down, the everlasting heavens
Peered between vaulted boughs upon us there.
If there is cool content on this round earth
Here must her harbour be: here might she come
To refuge from the fierce pulsation of
The noonday meadows, or the noisy streets;
And like Ophelia, garlanded with flowers,
Float crooning on the stream. And here lay we
Unconscious of the world and its long questions,
Unconscious of the steady lapse of summer,
Unconscious of our breathing even; of life
Thinking no bitterness; and dead to death.

The beauty of the river taunted me,
Struck low, preluding chords upon my sense,
And left the theme unfinished. It was madness
Fathoming beauty's purpose; maddening
With our poor human gifts to try to close
A fugue so finely started; maddening
To read the full solemnity of peace
On trees above, to watch content below
Come stealing by on breathing waves, on winds
To feel content waft down, to fill our eyes
With colours of content, and yet, alas!
Never in either human heart to know
The friendly whisper of the wished-for guest.

I do not know what restless questioning
Ran through your mind in that uneasy ease,
Only you seemed no happier than you dared,
As though the very trees might enviously
Come crashing down if you should quite usurp
Their sole prerogative, and be content.
Nor you, my foster-brother, guessed what lay
Hidden behind my summer-languid eyes;
But seemed at times to envy me my mood.

O there's a gulf abysmal, dark and wide,
For ever fixed between the oldest friends,
And the impossible a soul longs after
Is to build bridges there, where none may build.
I almost hated beauty, I so loved her;
Night and day courted her, paid secret service
Year upon year before her haunting face,
Thinking no evil of so wonderful
A creature. Here in this quiet place
She stooped and mocked, and grew more fair in mocking.

Knew she what men may never know of us:
The hunger and the endless disappointment,
Desire and its eternal unfulfilment,
Fidelity to hopes that reason sneers at,
This loneliness? While you, whom I have known
And shared some hopes with, reading all about
In air and fretted sky and foliage,
And in the placid river, deep content—
You, with a heart so haunted, read in me
The symbolism of the summer time
That breathed about us; envied me indeed
A quiet that both lacked, that both desired
The unwilling hour to teach us, but in vain.

ADAM AND EVE

THE spirit fails—Oh cruelty
Of Time ! Behold the earth puts on
Her never-old embroidery
Again, and music stirs the wood
As last year; though misunderstood
Now, and all magic gone.

Yet still to better ears and eyes
Earth's trim melodious manners seem
Prophetical of paradise
Coming again, renewed again;
(As thrushes tell in sun and rain;
As Eve and Adam deem.)

Mark their impetuous steps; they move
Like dancers when the music starts—
Like dancers when the tune they love
Floats to them through the doorway, clearly,
(Mark their responsive steps) and dearly
Falls on their rhyming hearts.

O rare young wayfarers, even now,
The folly of such sighs reproving,
You pass—but as you pass, endow
My sense with some sweet cunning too:
More than I lose returns in you,
And in your laughter much lost loving.

TO INDIFFERENCE

IF rest from you, which I do not ask, come never,
And the dark-winged power, whose guide you are, continue,
Either defeat me, or make my renown for ever;
Let me find lightning of scorn or comfort in you.

Alas, that my dumbness, broken by passion's power,
Should break into words whose meanings you cannot measure.
I fear lest the storm she invokes may shatter the flower;
Lest desire may despoil himself of the longed-for treasure.

Cut through the mist with a sword or a wing! O hear me!
Sorrow is mocked with the names of love and delight;
Uncover or close such eyes—desert or draw near me;
Blind me with utter darkness, or marvellous sight.

A LATE SPRING

A TARDY spring is sudden bliss;
When in a week to life and leaf
March wakes the woods from nakedness,
Sweet is that sudden end to grief.

Yesterday winter was; to-day
The print of passing spring is plain,
And birds from every greening bough
Make the air ring with hope again.

Surely this allegory needs
No more expounding! Seems the spring
Sweeter by short withholding? Dear,
Let not the birds belie the spring!

THE EARLY THRUSH

AH now! Ah now!
On that acacia bough—
The very top of the tree—
A thrush is singing;
Merrily, merrily while
The sun to his spangled breast
Gold from a glorious east
Is bringing.

O bird, as eagerly
As thou art singing, I
Long to reply!
Where dost thou gather thy music? Whence
Thy delight?
Art thou not blind to behold
The blaze unfold?
Not dizzy with singing yet?
And canst thou face
The burning dawn not dumb,
And not forget
In praise the way to praise?

Thou throat of the vernal earth!
She stirring tells thee
These phrases, to this mirth
Her pulse compels thee.
Is it a dream that thou,
Through the acacia bough,

Feelest the thrill of the impetuous spring,
Which, while thy long notes ring,
Rises from roots that grapple the very heart
Of earth, and doth impart
Its rich access of joy for thee to sing?

Hark! oh hark!
It rises with a lark;
It is taken up again now far away.
And all the scattered joys
Blend in one placeless voice,
Filling the air of all the halls of day.

BOYS BATHING

THEY laugh! They leap! The clear,
Cool, lapping water parts;
One after one each starts
From his place on the grass, and sheer
Leaps from the bank without fear.

Their lithe arms slip like blades,
Their glowing bodies skim
Up from the clear and dim
Caverns of quivering shades
And the sedges' secret beds.

One stands, aglow with the sun,
His white shape gleamingly wet,
Like alabaster set
Against dark grass, and one
Splashes him wild with fun.

And now like statues glowing,
Slim and lithe and free,
They race exultingly,
Their proud heads backward throwing;
Happy, untrammelled, unknowing.

The loud lark's sunny voice
Shivers out of the sky,
The lush green meadows lie
Lulled in his lovely noise;
O day that art passing by
Hold fast in memory
The vivid wonderful poise
Of naked bathing boys.

FROM THIS FAIR NIGHT

FROM this fair night to draw meet music down
A long-benighted wind makes harps of trees,
And, not to lose the sight while men's eyes drowse,
The moon gives light and stares upon the scene.

Dew upon dew condenses; from the city
Chimes of far-away bells the hours attune,
The silver landscape, no man walks wherein,
Unto itself is sweet, a secret beauty.

Oh that content, content might softly so
Steal over me and cheat this longing for fame,
That I might love the trees about my home,
Or well enough sing to throw my songs away.

A SECRET FIRE

BEAUTY dies, if Beauty be
What of late delighted me;
Yea, if in the countryside
Beauty lived once, she has died.
Now I cannot find a lane
That offers old delight again,
Though the coloured herbage be
Rich with old variety,
Though the reeling hedge retains
Its honeysuckle—though the chains
Of glossy bryony enrich
Every bramble in the ditch.
Beauty dies, if Beauty be
What such sight invoked in me.

Yet my unreasonable heart
Gives to Beauty no such part;
And still the mortal mind in me
Fancies immortality.
Seeing the resurrected year
I encourage no such fear,
Hoping, till disappointment settles,
For the old bloom on the new petals,
Thinking loss a passing thing
That shall be remedied each spring.

Beauty is more than eyes' delight;
She lives on in death's despite.
Beauty is more than sensual pleasure;
That was only the youngster's measure.
Early from flower and grass and tree
The first flame shot to burn in me,
And kindled, as my love has been,
From sparks without a warmth within.

Beauty might die, if Beauty were
What boys' eyes but fancied her;
But Beauty lives in man's desire
To find her. She's a secret fire.

THE EMIGRANT

GOODBYE then. Do not keep your anger;
Blame me, and then forgive me soon.
Let it be said, if heart should ask it,
Love can forgive the wrong once done.

Bitter enough regrets will haunt me;
Happiness chide me. Do not cry;
Do not remember anger in sorrow;
Blame—but forgive me soon. Goodbye.

VANITY

IN this brave world of good delight
How does it fare with you to-night?

In this perplexing world of sorrow
How will it fare with you to-morrow?

Minute by quickly passing minute,
In life, with so much strangeness in it,
In days when wintry rigour holds,
In nights when infinite space unfolds,
In solitude when questions come,
In gaiety, abroad, at home,
In dream and doing, in content,
Times arduous, times indolent,
How fares it with your heart?
I heard
The laurel-branches as they stirred
Shaking beneath the wind. . . . Alas!
I heard long midnight strike and pass,
And silence, having fallen dumb,
Waited the word that cannot come.

Not all my questioning could break
The barrier down that mountains make;
Loving can never lessen now
The distance set between us two.

I might bespeak the stars; but they
Would only fling my words away,
Dumb in returning, as must be
Every inhuman embassy.

Vain that I question darkness so.
I know that I shall never know.

KEEP PACE

KEEP pace with Beauty, for she will
Not stay for prayers; she stands not still;
But even now drawn near, begins
Without farewell to leave you.

Yet Time's march need not trouble such
Lips and clear eyes as yours o'ermuch,
Nor Age's frost disfigure you,
Nor Sorrow's wrinkles grieve you.

For Beauty, keeping step with years,
Your body Time's, your spirit hers,
Constant to those who constant be,
Will lead but not defeat you.

Each in its light—the may, the rose,
The fruit, the frost—as Time bestows;
So with Time's changes Beauty vies;
But changing cannot cheat you.

PALESTINE

OH, we speak not overmuch
Of the strange lands we have seen,
Our eyes were not for such
Very keen.

And the brightest thing we knew,
In a land of gaudy flowers,
Was a daisy, tipped with dew,
English! Ours!

DISTANT TRUMPET SONG

A WHITE, high-battlemented castle,
Set in the heart and centre of a rainbow,
With rain-weighed trees nodding around it,
And a great sward flowing up and down.
Give you good dreams, love,
As little children dream.

A summer pool by silence haunted,
Deep in the greenness lit by water-lilies,
Where there are kingfishers, and the unreaped grasses
Whisper soft secrets to the listless winds.
Give you good dreams, love,
As little children dream.

And night, and the stars, and naught beside,
But in your heart of hearts a brimming wonder,
And following, sweet vision-lights of spirits,
And the waves of the sea of peace upon you.
Give you good dreams, love,
As little children dream.

THE LILAC TREES

THE lilac trees are in flower,
Melody's rife;
After the storm and the shower
Fresheneth life.

The veins of beauty fill,
And over wet grass
Belated raindrops spill
If a wind pass.

Beauty from beauty springeth;
Colour and song
Waken delight which bringeth
Summer along.

O, my heart, my heart,
You, why do you tarry?
Holding aloof and apart
While earth is merry?

RISE NOW

'RISE NOW,' the season says, 'the waiting-time
Is over, and the issue asks for doing;
Fantastic plans, and dreams, and fain complying
Were but the luxuries of passive gloom.

'Now to the battle, now to the proof of love,
All hope of recompense dispelled in action,
All sorrow scorned, and sorrow's dim seduction,
Joys vainly desired drowned in the mere *I have*.'

To which there is no reply but resolution,
Seeing the signs of life, and the earth arraying,
Nothing is left but to be up and doing,
Or, passively failing, to die in slow stagnation.

Therefore, O Spring, let hateful death despair;
I hear thy prelude, and my pulse is stirring;
On to an end unguessed! And glad wayfaring!
Lead for the life's sake—I am thy follower!

PYGMALION

THY beauteous body not desired by me,
Moments there are when I can be content
In loving, to love thee best in banishment;
No other gain so great as losing thee.

Whom I desire in passionate possession
My body will not tell me. Far thou art;
A phantom through the flame, a being apart,
A worshipped stranger deaf to all confession.

And yet, girl, it is beauty, in thy look,
Thy secret breast, thy undiscovered grace,
That calls while I am musing on thy face,
Reading thy spirit as one reads a book.

I love thee! There's the mighty truth I know;
Thou art that soul, set in that frame of fire,
And if I knew the roots of my desire,
Or soul or body needs must love forgo.

Therefore stay marble. Let my wooing fail.
Make thy denial eternal. Thus alone
Shall perfect love, though sorrowful, go on
Into unfruitful darkness—and prevail.

Yet if thou canst love, let there be some sign;
I will renounce perfection. Ah, good soul,
Lift up thy arms in longing once, and the whole
Argument crumbles, such strange moods are mine.

THE OPEN SECRET

THE brighter sunshine will betray
That the best season's on her way
To this world winter-surfeited:
Not that wet snow, or iron frost,
Have tyrannised, but we have lost
Much happiness since leaves were shed.

At first, truth has it, welcomed we
The new design of every tree,
And found in novelty a charm;
But long ago our eyes grew tired
Of outline, and our hearts desired
More green, and days more warm.

That was the longest waiting-while—
Countryman's test, and lovers' trial—
When the wet-haloed sun (or less)
Peered down on naked, furrowed tracts
Of clay, when streams were cataracts,
And all their music noisiness.

But earth's despair is dying fast,
And ours is dead: for thought slips past
Reality, and at a bud
Recovers spring's forgotten flower.
We lack, indeed, the prophet's power;
But there's strange stirring in our blood;

And sense leans forward at a sign
Of coming pleasure—can divine
Some heaven foretold in common clay.
Therefore, though winter is not gone,
Whatever sign we go upon
We guess. We know, but cannot say.

ABSENCE IRONIC

I STOLE upon the city, where,
Stranger to love, you live;
But, on my soul, my passion there
Seemed weak and fugitive.

Yet here, where never foot of yours
Disturbed the woods—where squirrels hide,
My passion takes my mind by force,
And I walk deified.

I doubt my solitary state;
And, being fooled by love,
Have walked on wider paths of late,
Where more than one might move. . . .

Still, should the story reach your ear,
Laugh at my folly, look the part,
Lest any city-dweller hear
An echo in your heart.

A FIRST CROP

SO little harvest in my fields to reap!
How shall I winter? Much inheriting,
I have let pass the early seasons; deep
In drowsy sense, I have let slip my Spring.

Yet what a fool Despair would make of me,
And so steal, sheaf by sheaf, my scanty corn;
As though to stand and watch, regretfully,
The rich day die, the barren season born,

To count the giddying leaves as they skim down
From high twigs, from low branches, to the stubble,
To let the thin ears rot meanwhile, to frown
Upon their meagreness, could ease that trouble.

All empty talk! What ghost is this Despair?
O were there but an Echo in these plains
To mimic my immortal blasts of air,
Or to repeat my minor dulcet strains,

How I should burst out laughing to amass
So many maudlin ditties from the void,
And make young Echo drop her sad 'Alas!'
And render laugh for laugh that I enjoyed.

So then, to corn we'll turn, the thirty-fold;
Harvest is harvest, though the crop be thin;
Put the bright sickle to the slender gold,
And let them count its worth who bring it in.

THE EXCUSE

BEAUTY of form, of lip, of cheek, of eye, of word,
of deed,
Not for thou hast, though thou hast these, I love
thee; this were choice;
Thou art my mistress for no cause; I love because I need;
But praise, to still my questing mind, thy looks, thy grace,
thy voice.

I SPEND MY DAYS VAINLY

I SPEND my days vainly,
Not in delight;
Though the world is elate,
And tastes her joys finely.

Here wrapped in slow musing
Lies my dark mind,
To no music attuned
Save its own, and despising

The lark for remoteness,
The thrush for bold lying,
The soft wind for blowing,
And the round sun for brightness.

O tarry for me, sweet;
I shall stir, I shall wake!
And the melody you seek
Shall be lovely, though late.

THE LITTLE TOWN

GREY moonlight over the little town
Lies like deep water, and the houses drown.
The market-place is now the coralled floor
Of an unmeasured ocean, and the roar
Of day forgotten quite
Under this sea of silver night.

Long after midnight, over this
Untroubled unfamiliar quietness,
I muse. Far off the swimming stars look down
Through the clear deeps that overlie the town;
For the past hour no sound
Nor sign of life have I found.

The shadows creep across and climb
The blind façades; else would the lapse of time
Pass unremarked, and ages separate
Me from the building of this desolate
Unruined monument—
And, this last bond being rent,

Ancient it seems, deserted long ago
By a strange people at Time's overthrow;
And I some lonely watcher without name,
Full of old fancies, wondering how came
That sound of bells to cry,
Shaking the deeps where lost I lie.

HE THAT WALKETH THROUGH THE TWILIGHT

HE that walketh through the twilight
Sings a melody of peace,
Great he is and strong and comely,
Bearing on his star-swept forehead
Cool night-patience, and release
From the dusty day and torrid.
At his footstep, labour, cease.

From the far gradated colours,
Through the thin airs of the west,
His sure step advancing, rustles
Over dew-begetting grasses
Like a wind in search of rest;
Comes in majesty and passes
By the weary he has blest.

Deep to deep of heaven answers
Tone of colour unto tone;
Faint his song is, low but potent,
Strong to succour, soft and crooning,
Many hear and smile unknown;
Day has heard, she droopeth swooning,
Night has heard, she takes her own.

Shadow upon shadow deepens,
One by one the stars emerge,
Folded sheep and crofted cattle
Watch the dying western glimmer
Swallowed, and the dark night surge
From the valleys, dimmer, dimmer,
Till it tops the horizon's verge.

A POEM
IN SONNETS

But follow me,
And I will bring thee where no shadow stays
Thy coming.

I

1

SINCE Time, and Youth, and Life, and Love, decay,
Since even Eternity is proved a lie,
A false and agèd hope, now cast away
By some astronomer's wilder theory;
All poets' vaunted loves-inviolate
Crash to their doom; for Science knows so much,
That she can diagnose our love and hate;
And spirit falls to dust beneath her touch.
It is so easy! Love is this or that,
A natural stirring in the blood, no more;
And all this mystery we marvelled at,
And all that we were ever hoping for,
Lies here and here; where skilful blades uncover
This blood, this bone, this brain, of this dead lover.

2

O THOU that givest darkness, when for light
I call upon thy pity, vainly ever,
Thou that, omniscient, know'st my unhappy plight,
Mocker omnipotent, robber and giver;
When I am humbled to the very dust
From which I sprang at thy creating touch,
And when I say I'll praise thee (since I must)
And die to numbness, having suffered much;
Will my enforced compliance gratify
Thy lust for homage? Was no kinder way?
Thine from the first I was, and when I die
Cannot be more possessed. Lo, when I pray
Thou thyself settest words upon my tongue:
My love, my grief, my hate, are from thee sprung.

3

IN one that has so fairly prophesied
The lapse is bitter; how much kinder were it
Knowing so well the issue, to have cried
At the first inkling: 'Hope not!' when to bear it
With other sorrows following, had been
Not then impossible. But now, so late,
Why call down winter curses on the green
Riches of summer? Change most desolate!
Stay, I have done with pleading; and Farewell,
Once said, is best left silent; lest the pain,
Being so ill-endured, might so compel
Compassion as to awaken hope again;
Therefore be altogether cold and dumb,
Lest pity plead, and truth be overcome.

4

MY kinship with this soil beneath my feet
Is well established now. When I was glad
I was deceived by life, and that seemed sweet,
Which now by contrast seems divinely sad.
Under the coaxing sun of spring the ground
Put forth a million million slender shoots:
Slim swords of grass, between whose blades enwound
Dim fragrant flowers; and in these tangled roots
Lay jewels, dewdrops netting from the light
The seven pure colours of the bow. But now,
Under the chastisement of winter, quite
Obliterate are blade and bloom and bow.
What if my fancies share their shameful plight?
They die, these flowers, like any frail delight.

5

A VISION came to me of my old age;
Nothing seemed left to hope for; only rest,
Rest from a restless longing—a blank page,
And no desirous word to be expressed;
Blind future, short and valueless; with fear
Stripped of his wolf's disguise, and impotent;
Lost vivid visions of the past; an ear
Weary of song's deceptions—deaf content.
And this, this present sorrow, nothing more
Than the slow whimper of a foolish boy,
Illusioned for an hour, and crying for
A faded thing of false delight, a toy.
Visions of lies! O turn, turn thou and prove
Never came such an age from such a love!

6

HOW near into my ears night's silence breathes!
On sounds too slight for any ear to hear
While day gave others tongue, the hour bequeathes
Insistent sense. The flames make secrets clear
That in the day were hidden in a sigh;
The clock speaks every hopeless second out;
There is no wind; but all the air goes by,
Stealthy, forbidding, dreadful, full of doubt.
Starless the skies, and at my window-pane
The world drops sheer away! Alone, alone,
I of all living folk live on in vain,
And listen for the strange, familiar tone
Of words that I shall never hear again
In any voice so eager as your own.

7

PALE from the hands of night the grey day slips;
Dream before dawn is vanishing away:
Draw thy phantom hands through my finger tips;
Why should I bid thy ghostly forgiveness stay?
Almost daily thus I surrender thee,
Repeating the pain, repeating the bitter pain.
Come not again in darkness to mock at me;
Though, when the darkness comes, I cry: 'Come again!'
Thief of my light, my dear, thou art becoming;
Daylight is drowsed with sorrow; sleep seems waking;
Dawn, that brought vigorous life, brings now benumbing
And saddening loss to dull the day with aching.
If thou must come, come boldly, bodily;
Come in the daylight, daring reality.

8

WEARY with tears, I watched the heedless sun
Slip to his long repose behind the copse.
Beauty was all abroad, all crimson spun
Behind the leafless trees. Their fretted tops
Lay on the west, like ebony on gold,
Unmoving in the gentle wind that stirred.
All down the valley stillness seemed to hold
A world in trance; naught moved; no sound was heard.
Suddenly—(Ah, bright vision from the trees!)
His coloured wings like flames behind his face,
His hair like halo-gold along the breeze
Born of those wings that drove him on apace—
Came Love himself, forgivingly; and I?
Dumb as a stone I stood, and knew not why.

9

WAKEN no more these useless, lapsèd things,
Sorrows that have been borne. O waken not
Hour after hour these empty questionings;
Let Love lie lost in sleep, and be forgot.
Look not upon the broken happiness;
Garner no autumn leaves; but let the wind
Scatter and lose them in the wilderness,
Until their greenness passes out of mind.
But watch lest, losing sorrow, scorn should take
The crown and sceptre and impose his laws;
Think tenderly of Love for thine own sake:
O do not kill him in so weak a cause.
He is a hapless boy, in thy safe keeping;
Waken him not, weep not, but watch his sleeping.

10

I WILL be solemn then, and very wise,
As though I had not loved, nor ever met you;
I will forget your words, your laugh, your eyes;
I will forget—Oh, how can I forget you!
Let me begin. See, winter, drab and grey,
Devours the glories of the world about him;
One after one the colours slip away;
No bud, no leaf, no flower, but dies to flout him.
How sorrowful were the world with summer gone,
If winter, once arrived, should stay for ever;
How lovely even winter seems, when on
The heels of winter treads bright April weather;
And there, where winter sets next spring, I set you;
It were eternal winter to forget you.

II

THE white snow, falling all about the house,
Mantled the earth in absence of the sun;
Then dawn came coldly, peering in to rouse
A crowd of wondering children to their fun.
In this new earth, beneath a sombre sky,
Their very mirth was altered; and they sang
New songs, and played new pastimes tirelessly;
From dark to dark the day with laughter rang.
But with the down of blinds a silent thaw
Melted the transient loveliness away;
Dreary familiar fields was all they saw
When, waking early, they had hoped for play.
Our moody earth had called her sorrows back;
And all the trees had wept their whiteness black.

12

NOW splendidly the earth awakes to vigour,
Music and scent and colour flood the land,
And fields of naked soil no more disfigure
The skylark's sunlit prospects. Buds are fanned
Into a timid verdure, and a haze
Of delicate green imbues the far-away woods;
The cuckoo has begun to count his days,
The wind-flowers dance by the pale arum hoods.
Swiftly the sombre winter landscape alters,
More gradual change, and lovelier far than dawn;
Nothing departs, or fades, and nothing falters,
Only the cold despair of death is flown.
Courage, impatient heart; in thy despair
There shall be wrought a miracle as fair.

13

IN any hour of any day to come,
If it should chance some friend, or less than friend,
Questioning me, demand why I am dumb,
Or upon what dim dream my thoughts depend:
Though it were in the last year of my span,
When all the transient things are overpast,
And Death the spirit looks on me as man,
And my next step may likely prove my last;
If I am true, as now I swear, I know
Out of long silence I shall make reply
That all my constellated thoughts still go
About the cynosure of love gone by:
The rest of life is life's impermanence,
Love is the very hub of soul and sense.

14

DEAR spirit in thee, that thy eyes have cheated;
Dear love in thee, that foolish wisdom chilled;
Dear heart of thee, by its defence defeated;
Dear hope in thee, by too much hoping killed—
All these in thee shall not resign; but still
Speak in thy ear, in moments when alone
Thou liest dreaming; then shall thy eyes fill,
And pity and love their presences make known.
This is the time that I await! O then
Turn on this sudden pride, and with a cry
Call on my name, and I will come again,
Take up our love that pride has but laid by;
And thou shalt find it garlanded and young,
Fit for thy queenly service, quick and strong.

15

TAKE all the stars of heaven in thy two hands!
Sing; and the earth shall make thy voice as spring,
To wake and blossom at thy song's commands.
Thou, if thou wilt, canst winter set on wing;
Canst call forth beauty, manifest again
The fragile grace which sorrow dared to slay;
It is for thee to tune thy lute, for fain,
Fain is the frozen world to hear thee play . . .
I am the world I live in; of my seeing
These skies are born, and I create with eyes:
Wherein I see the earth it is my being,
And as I grieve the earth grieves. Then arise!
Waiting thy sure return this white throne stands;
Take all the stars of heaven in thy two hands.

16

TO that great day how slowly, oh how slowly,
Time wings his way, his weary way to thee;
From dawn, to noon, to twilight's melancholy,
Limps the tired day. And weary, wearily,
Spring, that was wont to fly, comes creeping by;
Till my impatience, longing for the summer,
Cries out upon his dallying. But I—
I am at fault, and spring is no late-comer.
Dearest, at long last shall the traitor Time
Lift to their wide extent his mighty wings,
Bearing, with other speed than this slow climb,
Our one day hence; and after that the springs,
On winged feet flashing past us, will not stay
When we cry, not for speed, but for delay.

17

I THINK, if I had alchemy enough,
Earth's vernal sweetness, that intoxicates
My body and my spirit, would lie safe
In words at last. But when the couplet shuts
Its final rhyme upon this sonnet, I,
With weary mind perusing, shall not find
Much magic reminiscent of the sky,
Nor breathe again the blossom-loaded wind.
O who shall give the secret, if not thou?
Thou who art pattern and epitome—
April in little? thou who didst endow
The sense and dost withhold the alchemy?
Give me the wit to make the beauty known;
The realms are mine; Come, let me wear the crown!

II

I

LEST I by so much asking weary thee,
Or lose by too great love the joy I covet,
This verse invokes thee not, though thou shalt be
Through every line the breath and music of it.
I will pour out my words for ears of strangers;
Old Time, save he be deaf, shall listen to me;
And men unborn, when I am past life's dangers,
Shall read, and smile, and half-believe they knew me.
Yet not for them, nor Time; yet not for thee,
But for this burden of the heart, to ease it,
Needs must I weave a lonely melody,
The world being quick or deaf, as most may please it;
For love may live unheard, but love unspoken
Is marked with death; and mine wears no such token.

2

BECAUSE I praise your beauty, Ignorance
Makes mock of me, and calls my sonnets lies:
Not that he sees no beauty in your glance;
Not that he finds no wit in your replies;
Not that he's blind, or sees no grace in youth;
Not that he's old, or envious, or mad;
He slanders not your beauty, but my truth,
Saying: 'She has what youth has always had.'
Then do not blame him, poor unfortunate;
One of the many in his eyes you are.
He never loved you; thus in his sad state
A girl is only a girl, a star a star.
Ah, but to me, the stars are chanting spheres;
I sing their music. Ignorance lacks ears.

3

STOP thy ears; turn the page; for in these lines
Nothing of thee appears, or from thee flows.
Although my idle queen, my muse, declines,
And will not be explained away in prose;
Yet I'll be bold, and putting love aside,
Make explanation to eavesdropping souls
How, though my words are scattering far and wide,
And though my love of thee my words controls,
No word betrays us; rather hides thee from
The common gazer, as a cloud can veil
The roaming moon that struck one singer dumb.
(I have not brought to mart that nightingale!)
So they but read themselves in terms of me,
Flatter their mistress with my praise of thee.

4

I HAVE begun what never shall be ended,
Though the words fail already and grow stale;
I have found wealth that cannot be expended;
I have met Truth, from whom I had this tale:
There is none fair like you, and none shall follow;
There is no love like mine, and none shall be;
There is no bliss but, love beside, seems hollow;
No time for love—but all eternity.
How can I finish praising beauty fitly?
How even think of love and not belie it?
How speak of perfect joy but incompletely?
Measure eternity and not deny it?
Yet, O just Friend, if courage be commended,
Say that I tried, although I never ended.

III

I

DAY follows, and day follows; I am still
Dreaming of what remains but dream, ungirt;
An idle climber on a little hill;
A coward boasting of a paltry hurt.
O fan the sparks of youth in me to fire;
Set me on bravely, drive me on to death!
With a great shout of: 'Life, and my desire!'
Let me ride down to battle. But a breath,
A word, a look, and I am strong again:
Who shall withstand the sweeping of my sword?
My heart will teach my lips a song again,
Give but a look, a breath of love, a word.
And I will be what now I do but seem,
Dreaming no more of what is more than dream.

2

BODY be slave to me, that am her slave;
Responsive, ready, valiant, quiet, strong,
Quick, that her least command to me may have
Swiftsure obedience. Body, do not wrong
Beauty like hers by listlessness; who knows!
She may in any impelling danger call thee.
If she should find thee sunk in dull repose!
Body, be thrall to her that does enthrall me.
Awake, be eager in so high an honour;
Thy treasure, strength, well-guarded, worthy, pure;
Let no unready errant wait upon her.
If she should call thee now! O slave, endure;
Toil singing; since a queen has heard thy vow,
Love royally. If she should call thee now!

IV

I

O EARTH, I am thy son, bone of thy bone;
Of love I drank deeper than life at thy breast;
Heard many a story from thee, when, alone
Together, we two outwatched the dying west;
Or in some secret tryst with dawn, when I
Trod upon tiptoe through the unwakened wood,
And heard thee stir at my approach, and sigh
A welcome to thy son, born of thy blood . . .
Sing all my sorrows hence, motherly voice;
How can a scion of thee be grieved in spring?
All birds and flowers are thine, and these rejoice;
If I am thine, I sin in sorrowing.
Bear with my woes no more! Thy beauty appears:
Back to thy heart I turn, and no more tears!

2

THE twilight-taken blackbird calls his mate;
The flocks' far cries subside; the listening copse
Wonders to hear him sing, so sweet and late;
The hazels sigh in sleep. The blackbird stops.
Then, star by star, the secret universe
Burns into being, and I know the immense
Cities of God again, the heavens rehearse
Whose glory and unchanged magnificence.
Of that enfolding Flame of God am I
A spark, as suns and stars and moons are part,
And by what thought soever in me seems high,
And in what measure loves my mortal heart,
I am divine, and deathless, and shall live
Though star nor sun nor moon has light to give.

3

INTO the night, the quiet air, there rises
The vesper of birds in sombre forest choirs;
Beyond the northern gloom a look surprises
A few faint stars; and clouds, caught in the fires
Flung from a dead west, wait for the full moon
To turn them back to silver with possession:
Bright from the empty east she climbs, and soon,
A mimic sun, begins the night's procession.

Into a restless spirit, too, there drops
With the coming of night, content; of silence, patience;
All the regretful fret of longing stops;
Love forgets his foolish protestations;
And no desire supplants, no passion mars,
Nor song disturbs the witness of the stars.

4

I CANNOT tread between the flowers that grow,
I cannot stoop so low but my wet cheek
Is brushed with leaves from some besprinkled bough;
Lest I disturb the birds, I dare not speak.
The blue intensity of zenith skies
Shot by the snow of scattered clouds, looks down,
And with the sun and shade of verdure vies
Where the fields sparkle in the eye of noon.
The darkening shower had paused, the sun peered through;
There was no wind to sweep the scents away;
Suddenly thus, each sound and scent and hue
Compelled me to acknowledge summer's sway.
That moment won, my winter woes surrendered;
Love I serve still; but under no false standard.

5

IT was the hour when neither night nor day,
Nor light nor dark, nor any temporal sign
Bounded the world—though night was on its way,
And day behind the trees made red decline.
Long was the reign of quiet; though I heard
The evensong of birds, and dying sounds
Of busy life far off, where townsmen stirred
Beyond the solemn spinney's utmost bounds.
Peace had authority; but I was proud,
And weakly dealt awhile in sorrow, and wept.
Suddenly through my musings, half aloud,
The recollection of your laughter swept!
Dearest, for very shame I thrust aside
My self-sown griefs for ever, and replied!

6

AT last the call of earth rings clear again:
My senses thrill before the summer songs:
The song of dawn, of proud noontide, of rain
That stilly falls, of flowers that nod in throngs.
And if what's worthy, fine, and delicate,
Recalls a name that sadness once be-rhymed,
Tears are as far from falling at my fate
As snow in June—and that would be ill-timed!
Come, dearest Perdita, my greed is dead;
Let no man say I lose the summer's wealth
With crying for the moon—the last tear's shed;
Needs must spring conquer, though she win by stealth;
And summer follows spring, until green mirth,
Like a wide sea of laughter, floods all earth.

7

BEHIND the living hours of urgent spring,
And the high noons of May and leaf-built June;
Buried with winter's bones, where, whispering,
The tasselled grass stands high beneath the moon;
Behind the better mind of love, where loss
No meaning holds that is worth weeping over;
Where stranger envy does not dare to cross,
Where covetousness no longer proves the lover;
Behind contentment, buried like a thief;
Dead of a groan too many, and forgotten,
Lies the unholy body of my grief,
Past hope of resurrection, deep and rotten;
No stone to mark his final infamy;
Lost to the world, as I am lost to thee.

8

PAST hope of resurrection? Yet, at times,
Old sorrow's ghost haunts an unquiet day;
Comes, when the bees are droning (drunk in limes
That scent the light) and scares the years away:
Comes on the daisied lawn, but bends no blade;
Comes on the river, but no ripple stirs;
Comes upon music that is aptly played
By someone ignorant of empty years.
O lips that speak, but have no word for me,
Being so long so very far away,
I am content with silence; for although
Nothing was true in love's wild prophecy,
Nothing uncommon in love's overthrow;
Nothing but sorrow could in love decay.

9

WEARY of play, some summer eve, may chance
You will come running in from dewless lawns,
The long day's laughter in your countenance;
(O laughing eyes, where brighter beauty dawns!)
And taking up this book, as one might take
A leaf or flower or blade of grass while speaking,
Read lightly on, a word or two, and make
No meaning of them; little meaning seeking.
There standing, bending head and straying hair,
As leaf by leaf you idly turn these over,
Love, love—the word will meet you everywhere,
And you will laugh, remembering your lover;
And take the book, perhaps, being tired of play,
To wonder and read till daylight dies away.

THE END

A Note on 'Analysed Rhyme'

AN experiment along lines which are believed to be new has been made in the poems on pages 24, 25, 39, 49, and 56. It is generally agreed that the bondage of rhyming, of which Milton once complained, is in reality an advantage to the poet. But certain modern poets whose temperament chafed under artistic restrictions, desiring to excuse themselves for new departures, set about accusing rhyme of staleness, and this accusation, whatever traditionalists may say of the motives of those that brought it, is to some extent true. Such words as *love* and *life* and *time* leave so little choice to the poet, and have already been rhymed in so often, that we begin to grow weary of them. Assonance is slipshod and sometimes even unpleasant. A true rhyming termination is generally made up of vowel and consonant. 'Analysed rhyme' takes notice of both elements, as true rhyme does, but splits the endings up and interchanges the vowels. Thus on page 56, in—

> 'I spend my days vainly,
> Not in delight;
> Though the world is elate,
> And tastes her joys finely,'

vainly and *elate* have rhyming vowels and different consonants, so have *delight* and *finely*; while *vainly* and *finely* have rhyming consonantal endings and different vowels, and so have *delight* and *elate*. This, though it rather increases the bondage, which is no real disadvantage, provides an entirely new set of pairs. Yet the effect is generally so nearly that of rhyme, still pleasantly and exactly completing the echo of previous endings, that the method has been used in one of the sonnets in conjunction

with ordinary rhyme and has not noticeably interrupted the expected music even in so strict a pattern. It would be foolish to claim that the effect is exactly the same as that of rhyme; indeed, it is more to claim that this is a new and more subtle tune in words. Those who are curious may find its effect best when listening while some one else reads. To practise this method of writing they will find rather distracting at first, a fact which only goes to prove that our English rhymes are becoming more polarized than we imagined. The limitations of the method are obvious. Endings having the consonant *r* as a component are refractory; the pleasantest effect is found in double-endings.

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